



## JAINISM AND RATNA -TRAYAS

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### ABSTRACT

Jainism teaches everyone to lead and live a simple blissful life without violence and hatred and to maintain common understanding among each other. It is the most peace loving religion and asks everyone to respect all forms of life. Lord Mahavira, popularly known as Shraman Bhagwan propagated the religion 2600 years ago and stressed importance on non-violence and equality among all living beings. He emphasized broadly on showing love and respect to each and every living beings. His preachings are relevant even today and established a message for the welfare of all beings. The Ratna- trayas namely Samyak darshana (right faith), Samyak jnana (right knowledge) and Samyak Charitra (right conduct) are considered as the foundation of Jainism. In the present paper an attempt is made to focus on the importance of three Ratnas of Jainism to attain the heights of humanity.

**KEYWORDS:** Jainism, Ratna-trayas, Liberation

### INTRODUCTION

"No wonder then that Jainism is a system which offers much that is permanent and eternal and has stood the test of time, it has helped and still help humanity to regain its inner balance which is the crying need of the present age."

Jainism, traditionally known as Jain Dharma is considered one of the ancient Indian Religions that lays great stress on the overall development in all aspects of human life. The essence of Jainism bears special significance for the better social order and spiritual advancement of mankind. Jainism is an important philosophical system for the welfare of humanity in maintaining peace and harmony in the society. Jainism teaches everyone to lead and live a simple blissful life without violence and hatred and to maintain common understanding among each other. It is however mentionable that Ahimsa or Non – violence is one of the doctrines of Jainism and as such human being is the highest of all to conquer all passions and desires. It is the most peace loving religion and asks everyone to respect all forms of life.

Lord Mahavira, popularly known as Shraman Bhagwan propagated the religion 2600 years ago and stressed importance on non-violence and equality among all living beings. He emphasized broadly on showing love and respect to each and every living beings. His preachings are relevant even today and established a message for the welfare of all beings. He recommended the practice of certain virtues and encouraged everyone for sympathetic understanding and peaceful co-existence to eradicate the evils of the society. In the words of Mahavira, "To kill or hurt any living being amounts to killing or hurting oneself. Compassion to others is compassion to one's own self." This implies that destruction of environment is an act of violence. Positive aspects towards all beings are the utmost need of the hour in the age of globalization. Mahavira further says, "Not to kill any living beings is the quintessence of all wisdom. Certainly one has to understand that non-violence and equality of all beings are essentials of dharma."

"Arhat dharma" is the ancient name of Jain religion. "Nirgranth Pravachan" was in vague during the time of Mahavir. The name "Jain religion" came into existence on 3rd and 4th century after the emancipation of Lord Mahavira and he became the last of 24 Tirthankars who set new patterns to his followers who are later on called as Jains. Jain religion worships the real qualities of a soul and does not believe in worshipping an individual. Among the 24 Tirthankars, Lord Rishabh was the first interpreter of Non-violence and Mahavir who flourished from 599 to 527 was the rejuvenator of the faith of Jain religion which had complete tradition and teachings of Tirthankars.

The first Tirthankars Rishabhdev contributed a lot for the development of the masses and trained Indians in systematic agricultural work. Being a wise cultivator he strengthened the way of living of the people of the society and laid strong emphasis on the simple dharma – a contribution put forth to the Indian way of life. He not only trained people but also guided them through his exemplary teachings of realistic honesty to make his life worth giving till today. His teachings to the masses are beyond any expectations and his concerns are firm for the development of humanity without any limit.

Lord Mahavira who established the Ratna – Traya - system inspired the Indian masses to acquire the heights of living and guided them to attain highest level of humanity. His Ratna - traya - system is the combination of three jewels Samyak

darshana (right faith), Samyak jnana (right knowledge) and Samyak Charitra (right conduct) – is the belief to unite people and to attain the heights of humanity.

### JAINISM AND ITS DOCTRINE

The Ratna- trayas namely Samyak darshana (right faith), Samyak jnana (right knowledge) and Samyak Charitra (right conduct) are considered as the foundation of Jainism. These three doctrines are the three jewels of Jainism which are interdependent to each other. These three jewels exist in the self only. They must be determined by the pure nature of the self. It is however true that absolute freedom from attachment is necessary for liberation. One can attain happiness by the ultimate knowledge of the reality, complete devotion to the Tirthankaras and the scriptures and have control over self. Nirvana is attained by realization of the true nature of the self. According to Acharya Kundakunda's

### Samayasa

"Belief in the nine substances as they are is right faith (Samyak darsana), knowledge of these substances without doubt, delusion or misapprehension, is right knowledge (Samyak jnana) Being free from the attachment etc. is right conduct (Samyak charita). These three, together, constitute the path to liberation."

### Samyak darshana (right faith)

Samyak Darshana is a process of self realization to understand one's own self, to follow the path of truth. It is sincere belief in the essential principles of Jainism. It is defined as faith in truth. It requires a great deal of discipline and to exercise a logical attitude in life. It is the foundational element on the part of kevala. Right faith guides one to appreciate the reality of life and to accept the belief of one's self through the result of our karma. This doctrine helps man to see the nature of reality which a man form in his mind. To have a total faith in truth, the Tirthankaras are the real torch bearers whose preachings have deep impact on the mind of the followers. The scriptures of these Tirthankaras are called Agamas where the followers can get better perception in the nature of reality and the faith in truth.

Samyak Darshan is a popular term which indicates one's belief in Jain philosophy. It is essential for the soul to move up spiritually and improves one's vision to attain self realization. A true believer has deep faith in the nature of the soul and it becomes an important fact that Samyak Darshan is the right path of liberation. In Jain philosophy seven fundamental principles are believed to be of great significance to attain Godhood or liberation.

**Jivas:** Jivas are all living beings which are divided into five categories. The consciousness in Jivas is also known as the soul. Souls have different names like Chetan, Atma, Trikali, Samaysar etc. and it is an entity different from body. Soul is considered a sort of substance which is invisible, shapeless and indestructible and can never be reproduced. Soul is never born and body is a home for the soul.

**Ajiva:** Ajivas are something those are not found in a soul. Consciousness, knowledge or vision are absolutely absent in Ajivas. Pudgal (matter), Dharma (medium of motion), Adharma (medium of rest) Akash (space) and Kala (time) are the five broad categories of Ajivas which signify the intermingled state of soul and body as both the substances are separate from each other because of

different attributes.

**Ashrav:** Ashrav is caused by wrong beliefs and it is the influx of karma particles to the soul. A person's behavior and actions are the direct reflection of his internal thoughts. One should be very careful about his thoughts while performing anything day in and day out. There are forty two ways through which the soul is exposed to the inflow of karmas. Out of the forty two ways five are senses, four are passions, five are avratas, three are yogas and twenty five are activities. They are also regarded as major and minor Ashrava. The first seventeen of these ways are regarded as major ashrava while the other rest twenty five are known as minor ashrava.

Ashrava can also be named in eighteen different forms (sins): violence, falsehood, stealing, sexual activity, possessiveness, anger, ego, deceit, greed, attachment, hatred, quarrelsome, false accusations, divulging someone's secrets, backbiting, taking delight in committing sins, being unhappy with religious acts, lying maliciously, trusting false belief, religious teachers and religions.

**Bandh:** The Karman Vargana has the most subtle particles. Karmas are classified into eight categories depending upon their nature. The actual binding of Karma particles to the soul is called Bandh. It comes immediately after the Ashrava. It occurs with our reaction to any situation with a sense of attachment or aversion. The nature and the quantity of the bondage of the karmas depend on the vigour of activities. Our activities are unintentional or without any passions then these karmas are called the Dravya Karmas whereas our activities are intentional or with passions like anger, ego, greed and deceit these karmas are known as Bhava karmas. Bhava karmas stay for a longer time with the soul on the other hand Dravya karmas last for a shorter period and easily fall off from the soul.

**Samvar:** Samvar prevents the incoming of new karma into the soul and is the first significant factor in the process of liberation of the soul from the karmic matter. It is the process by which the influx of karma particles is stopped. Anantanatha said, "whatever action there is of mind, speech and body that is Asrava (channel for acquiring karma). Good action is the cause of a good Asrava: bad action is the cause of a bad Asrava. The source of blocking of all channels is Samvara. Nirjara is the destruction here of karmas that are the sources of existence.....". In Samvara karmic matter flows into the soul with every action and complete freedom can be attained by the continuous activity of the mind and body. The perfect control on the organs of action must be put on the mind, body and speech of karmic matter to enter into the soul. Samvara can be accomplished by constant practice of religious meditation, conquest of desire, forgiveness, purity, truth and overall restraint from the concentration on self.

**Nirjara:** Nirjara is the destruction of the karmas, a process of purification of the soul by means of penance. As Nirjara is of two kinds such as Sakama Nirjara and Akama Nirjara both have their specific aims to delineate the path of spirituality. Sakama Nirjara is motivated and requires effort on the part of the Jiva whereas Akama Nirjara is unmotivated and effortless. In Sakama Nirjara, karmas show their maturity voluntarily or willingly by special efforts. Then karmas will be shed off more easily and we have a control on this active process. The destruction of karmas occurs ahead of their natural time. Karmas lose their bondage and exhaust themselves after producing their results in Akama Nirjara. The annihilation of the karmas or its complete decadence is the Nirjara. The attributes of the soul will shine speedily depending upon the effectiveness of the Nirjara. When the karmas mature they show their results and these results are experienced completely.

**Moksha:** Moksha is a transcendent state leading to Nirvana. It refers to the liberation or freedom of the soul to attain spiritual perfection. According to Sacred Jain text, Tattvartha Sutra, "Owing to the absence of the cause of bondage and with the functioning of the dissociation of karmas the annihilation of all karmas is liberation. In fact Jainism is also known as moksha marga or the "path to liberation".

#### **Samyak Jnana (Right knowledge)**

Samyak Jnana is the primary one of all the three ratnas. Samyak Jnana is meant of true and complete knowledge. It can be achieved by studying and following the teachings of the omniscient Tirthankars. Right knowledge is the knowledge of the self. It is free from doubt or uncertainty. It is the cognition of the real nature of soul and non-soul. It is a true representation of what it is. According to Jainism there are eight types of knowledge among them five constitute right knowledge. The remaining three types of knowledge are known as false knowledge (Mithyagyan). The five types of right knowledge are Matigyan (mental knowledge), which is obtained through the normal faculties of the mind. The normal faculties of the mind are perception, cognition, analysis and memory. Mati is also divided into Smriti (remembrance), pratyabhijna or samjna (recognition), tarka (inductive logic) and abhinibodha or anumana (deductive logic). Mati is also classified into various categories such as Upalabdhi (end result) bhavana (feelings and emotion) and Upayoga (usefulness). However it is believed that Matigyan comes mainly through the sense organs (Indriyas). Srutigyan (acquired knowledge) is verbal and non-verbal knowledge acquired through secondary contact or another source. In Srutigyan, perception, cognition and understanding play an important role. Depending upon its acquired sources, Srutigyan is of four types – labdhi (contact), bhavana (attention), upayoga (utility) and naya (perspective). Srutigyan is based on the knowledge and

experiences of other people which have been borrowed through communication. Avadhiyan (distant knowledge) is acquired through higher faculties such as from birth (bhava) of previous karma or from virtues (gunas) by doing good karma and destroying bad karma. It is a kind of knowledge of distant and remote things. Manahparyayagyan (paranormal knowledge) is acquired through other people's mind to see and know what they are thinking. Manahparyayagyan is the knowledge which is limited to the extent of other people's minds and what is going on in them. It is limited only in case of humans. Kevalagyan (absolute knowledge) is described as the perfect knowledge and the ultimate knowledge which contains all viewpoints and perspectives simultaneously. It is acquired when a person has achieved nirvana. As karma is gradually removed from the embodied self, it begins to acquire different types of right knowledge. The extraordinary powers enable the Jiva to come into contact with higher beings. It gains more knowledge leading to its further purification. Jiva gradually moves on the path of liberation and achieves the highest knowledge or Kevalgyan. In the transcendental state Jiva gains perfect knowledge.

#### **Samyak Charita (Right Conduct)**

Samyak Charita comes from the awareness of what is right and what is wrong. It can be realized and understood by doing what is right. It aims to inculcate right ethics, values and principles and discipline by which a person can attain his ultimate freedom. Faith in the doctrine expect everyone to follow the path as revealed by the Tirthankaras and jinas. A follower of Jainism is expected to follow the path of Non-violence and live their lives according to the ethical rules of Jainism. They should devoid of all the worldly passions and resolve to remain committed to the path of non-violence. One cannot have right conduct without right knowledge and one can not have right knowledge without right perception; hence right perception leads to right knowledge and right knowledge leads to right conduct. To attain right conduct twelve great vows are described in Jain scriptures which inform on how to practice each of the main vows. The five vows of limited nature (Anuvratas) are as follows – Non-violence (ahimsa), Truthfulness (satya), Non stealing (asteya), Chastity (brahmacaryya) and Non attachment (aparigraha). On the other hand three merit vows (Gunavratas) are Dikvrata (self limitation), Bhogopabhogamane (self imposed limitations on consumable and non consumable items), Anarthadanda (avoidance of unnecessary evils). Whereas four Disciplinary vows are Samayikvrata (engaging in meditation), Desavakasikavrata (restriction on space), Pausadhavrata (ascetic) and Atithi Samvibhagavrata (charity). Hence Right Conduct is the main constituent element of the path to liberation.

#### **CONCLUSION**

It is true that man should live in company with nature and free themselves from all types of cruelties and destructive forces prevalent in the society around us. Violence brings disharmony, lack of mutual understanding which pollute the sympathetic atmosphere of the society. Every religion teaches individual self to be a human and preaches non-violence to change our mind, practices and mode of living. The principle of Jainism prescribe a code of conduct where non-violence is the foundation of life and an individual must be an ideal person with certain virtues. Jain values can encourage understanding and tolerance to improve the quality of life.

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